

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

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ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(Section of the Library Association)

HON. EDITOR: T. I. M. CLULOW
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Contents

ANNOUNCEMENTS	Page 2
PLAYS AND POETRY IN 1936	Page 3
CHILDREN'S BOOKS OF 1936	Page 11
SOME FICTION OF 1936	Page 16
SOME DECEMBER EXAMINATION QUESTIONS EXAMINED	Page 21
THE DIVISIONS	Page 24
CORRESPONDENCE	Page 26
NEW MEMBERS	Page 28

The Library Assistant Announcements

THE Inaugural Meeting of the 42nd session of the Section will be held at Chaucer House on Wednesday, 13th January, 1937, at 7 p.m. The President, Mr. Ellis Sellick (Cardiff), will be in the chair, and Mr. Jack Jones, the novelist, will address the meeting on "Novelists of the depression, with a footnote on what are known as established novelists." It is hoped that members will make a special effort to attend, and provincial members so doing will be entertained to tea beforehand, if they will notify Mr. W. C. Pugsley, Branch Library, Chadwell Heath, Romford, of their intention by 6th January.

Bad weather unfortunately affected the attendance at the December meeting at Tottenham. Mr. S. G. Berriman's paper was very good, as he made his title "The County branch librarian" cover a wide range of constructive criticism. While advocating the personal touch, he deprecated the principle of voluntary assistants, favouring regionalization rather than isolated centres. Differential *v.* flat rating, buildings, and stock were all dealt with, the last including the pros and cons of centralized book-selection. Messrs. Henryk Jones, Shore, Noble, and Bearman contributed to a useful discussion, and Mr. F. E. Sandry closed with a vote of thanks to the speaker. The Tottenham Libraries Committee were suitably thanked for their kind permission to use the Devonshire Hill Branch for the meeting, and the Libraries' staff for their generous hospitality.

Students interested in the correspondence courses are informed that particulars of the revised courses covering the 1938 examinations syllabus are to be found in the new edition of the *Library Association year book*, or may be obtained towards the end of the month from the Hon. Education Secretary.

The Hon. Treasurer asks us to remind Transitional Members that their subscriptions for 1937 became due on 1st January. Those attached to the Central Association should send their subscriptions direct to him, but those attached to a Division should send them to the appropriate Divisional Treasurer.

Owing to recent decisions of the Council, and other causes, considerable changes have occurred, both in the personnel of the Officers, and in the

The Library Assistant

matters with which they deal. The new arrangements will be found on the outside back cover, and correspondents are asked to note them *now*, to avoid unnecessary trouble and delay.

Those of our members who are interested in modern typography (and we hope that this journal has increased their number in recent years), may like to know that the new fount for headings is Tiemann Old Face, and for the text, Fournier. If the more conservative seek our reasons, we can reply that, not only is a change from time to time as desirable as a new suit, but also that the present change will make for greater readability. In recording these changes, we must pay tribute to the unfailing help and courtesy we have received from our printers, and we hope that their work will be appreciated by our readers.

LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES BRANCH

The Inaugural meeting of the Branch, which is to take place at Chaucer House on January 27th, at 7.30 p.m., will provide an opportunity for the consideration of many problems on which librarians and publishers do not always see eye to eye. For this reason, and also because all the speakers will be visitors to the Branch, it is hoped there will be a very large attendance to hear Mr. Geoffrey Faber (of Messrs. Faber & Faber, Ltd.), Mr. J. G. Wilson (of Messrs. John & Edward Bumpus, Ltd.), and Mr. J. P. Lamb (City Librarian, Sheffield) give their personal views on book-production and book-selling.

Plays and Poetry in 1936

W. B. STEVENSON

JANE AUSTEN, *Pride and prejudice* (Hamilton, 3s. 6d.). W. H. AUDEN, *Look! stranger* (Faber, 5s.). JULIAN BELL, *Work for the winter* (Hogarth, 3s. 6d.). JAMES BRIDIE, *Moral plays* (Constable, 7s. 6d.). ROY CAMPBELL, *Mithraic emblems* (Boriswood, 7s. 6d.). RICHARD CHURCH, *Twelve noon* (Dent, 2s. 6d.). NOEL COWARD, *To-night at 8.30* (Heinemann, 10s. 6d.). HUGH SYKES DAVIES, *Petron* (Dent, 2s. 6d.). T. S. ELIOT, *Collected poems* (Faber, 7s. 6d.). PAUL ENGLE, *Break the heart's anger* (Cape, 5s.). *Famous Plays of 1936* (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.). DAVID GASCOYNE, *Man's life is this meat* (Parton Press, 3s. 6d.). LILLIAN HELLMAN, *The Children's hour* (New York: Knopf, \$1.25). A. E. HOUSMAN, *More poems* (Cape,

The Library Assistant

5s.). C. DAY LEWIS, *Noah and the waters* (Hogarth, 5s.). LOUIS MACNEICE, *The Agamemnon of Æschylus* (Faber, 5s.). ARCHIBALD MACLEISH, *Panic* (Boriswood, 6s.); *Public speech* (Boriswood, 3s. 6d.). BURNS MANTLE, *Best plays of 1936* (New York: Dodd Mead, \$3). A. A. MILNE, *Miss Elizabeth Bennet* (Chatto, 5s.). CLIFFORD ODETS, *Three plays* (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.). FREDERICK PROKOSCH, *The Assassins* (Chatto, 5s.). JAMES REEVES, *The Natural need* (Constable, 5s.). RAINER MARIA RILKE, *Sonnets to Orpheus* (Hogarth, 8s. 6d.). MICHAEL ROBERTS, *Poems* (Cape, 5s.); *Faber book of modern verse* (Faber, 7s. 6d.). G. B. SHAW, *The Simpleton* (Constable, 7s. 6d.). DYLAN THOMAS, *Twenty-five Poems* (Dent, 2s. 6d.). W. B. YEATS, *A Full moon in March* (Macmillan, 5s.); *Oxford book of modern verse* (O.U.P., 7s. 6d.).

A PRELIMINARY glance at the drama of the year is productive mainly of disappointment. Perhaps the theatre really is dying. What sort of plays were the successes of the year? *Love from a stranger* was a nice little play about lust murder; the most successful play in London is Edgar Wallace's *The Frog*, two acts and innumerable scenes of well-staged hokum; *Lady precious stream* was alleged to be two thousand years old, and must be counted as a revival with *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Seagull*; *Call it a day* was a domestic comedy built to pattern; *Pride and prejudice*, a dramatization of a novel; in fact, the best and most original plays this year have come from America. Can it be that New York audiences, tired of the poppies and mandragora of Hollywood, are at last willing to think? It seems so from the dramatic output. I hope the wave of enthusiasm will soon be felt over here.

Too many of our playwrights are still composing endless variations on a domestic theme: *Call it a day* was one of these. A different variety was Helen Jerome's setting of Jane Austen's *Pride and prejudice*; delightful enough in its way, but contemporary drama, never. A. A. Milne's setting of the same scene, as yet unproduced in London, gave us an equally rosy view of the "domestic interior" variety, embellished with some characteristic Milnery. In some sophisticated settings we have had Noel Coward's nine one-act plays, *To-night at 8.30*. Frothy and ephemeral, perhaps, but dexterously written, and very twentieth century. James Bridie's *Moral plays* had the authentic flavour we expect from him; but neither *Marriage is no joke* nor *The Black eye* can be said to be in the same class as the *Sleeping clergyman*. Mr. Bridie says he wanted to do something different; but we are none the less aggrieved.

Shaw has given us *The Simpleton*, *The Six*, and *The Millionairess*.

The Library Assistant

They lacked little of the old satire and sting, yet one fancies that fiery vegetarian has said the same things before and better. Yet a more amusing set of characters than the cast of *The Simpleton* has seldom been assembled. From America we have also had some plays of social criticism—Clifford Odets' *Three plays*. Here is the very stuff of life and the theatre: dialogue so naturalistic that it may almost seem flat in reading, but in performance fills with life. *Awake and sing!*, with its setting of Jewish lower-class life, is a masterpiece; *Waiting for Lefty*, though not so original in form as we have been led to believe, is one of the most dynamic pieces of theatre craft for many a long day. No one who reads this play of a taxi-drivers' strike can fail to be moved by it; no one who saw those remarkable performances by the Unity Theatre Club can doubt that Odets is a dramatist of the first rank. *Till the day I die* is an anti-Fascist play; and though it has the same power, it seems too propagandist, in reading at any rate. The plays are raw chunks of life; they will seem crude to the more sophisticated theatre-goer; but they have vitality, force, imagination—qualities lacking in too many recent plays.

A real feast for the reader is *Famous plays of 1936*. It includes Schnitzler's *Professor Bernhardt*, *Till the day I die*, *Parnell*, *Boy meets girl*, *The Two bouquets*, and *Bury the dead*. *Parnell*, banned at first, is now attracting large audiences; this careful rendering of history deserves its current success. It takes liberties with the facts—what historical play does not?—its bias is all on the side of Katherine O'Shea; but it is a play full of tense situations, and that conflict so essential to good drama. *Bury the dead* is pacifist propaganda; that bare statement may lead us to expect the futilities of Bloomsbury; but nothing is farther from the truth. Here is a play that cries for production in London; these six soldiers, who refused to be buried, are great figures, and should walk the English stage soon. Of very different mould is *Boy meets girl*, an hilarious farce of Hollywood, keen in its satire, witty in dialogue, and brilliant in its commentary on the extravagances of filmdom.

Another omnibus and hardy perennial comes from America—Burns Mantle's *Best plays of 1936*. Nine synopses and extracts from current New York successes are given, with *Victoria Regina*, *Winterset*, *Idiot's Delight* (the Pulitzer prize play), and *Dead end*. This book, including many plays not produced in England, will be of great interest to theatre-goers; it includes a Year-book of the American drama, and is a tribute to the vitality of the New York theatre. *The Children's hour*, by Lillian

The Library Assistant

Hellman, is at present restricted to private performance in England. This remarkable play is a moving study of the effects of scandal on the lives of two school-teachers. A subtle and tense affair, it calls for some difficult acting by children; those who saw the emasculated version *We three* on the films will remember the performance of Bonita Granville as the "bad girl." The undercurrent of sex in the play will, I suppose, continue to make it unacceptable to the censor; it is, none the less, a play of distinction.

Poetic plays very often contain neither drama nor poetry; but three brilliant exceptions must be noted this year. *The Agamemnon of Æschylus*, translated by Louis Macneice, was a great play before translation; but this version has enhanced its value to readers and playgoers. One has only to compare this translation with the bare bones of the Loeb edition or the many "poetic" versions, to realize how compact and virile is Macneice's poetry; the drama is heightened without departing too much from the literal version; some of the modern idioms may jar on the ear of the hypersensitive, but the choruses gain new majesty. Here is a difficult task well done; surely the play is worthy of more than two private performances? C. Day Lewis's *Noah and the waters* is a morality play in verse, and though perhaps not a play for the stage, the choruses contain poetry of a high order, as readers of a *Time to dance* and *The Magnetic mountain* may expect. The waters are the proletariat; Noah is the plain man, torn between his loyalties; the burgesses are the ruling classes. The allegory seems to break down at times, but the experiment is an interesting and on the whole a successful one: it has fine cumulative effect; the monotony of so much verse drama is broken by passages of prose and near doggerel. *Panic*, by Archibald Macleish, is even more ambitious; to convey an impression, in American idiom, of the 1929 crash might seem almost impossible. On a reading, however, this play has great merit; the crowd scenes are successfully managed, with no attempt at pretentiousness; the central characters of McGafferty and his mistress are lifelike; and the conflict of capitalist versus worker makes the play move with precision and vigour. W. B. Yeats's *A Full moon in March* is another series of those masques in which he excels. His spare verse is made for performance rather than reading; these shadowy figures of legend might come more to life on the stage. The first play is more or less an Irish version of the Salomé legend; though Mr. Yeats says he has come close to Wilde, there is none of the luscious sensuality of Wilde's play here; the action and the verse is monastic in its simplicity.

The Library Assistant

The second play in the book, *The King of the great clock tower*, is longer and more ambitious, and an equally successful poetic play.

The poetry of 1936 is worthy of more attention than the drama; although quality rather than quantity has been the rule, a good number of notable books have been published. The year has been remarkable for several volumes of Surrealist verse, two of which, *Petron* and *Man's life is this meat*, are worthy of more than passing mention. Hugh Sykes Davies' *Petron*, published late last year, is sufficiently out of the rut to need mention here. A prose poem, it recounts the remarkable wanderings of Petron, a mysterious figure. The book has obvious affinities with that Surrealist Bible, *Les Chants de Maldoror*; Mr. Davies has, like Lautréamont, a taste for the gigantesque and the horrible; the strange episode of the murdered woman, the climbing entrails, and the blood-red babe may well make our hair stand on end. But the poem contains some remarkable passages of grandeur and beauty; and it cannot be denied that Mr. Davies is a poet of originality and power. If, like Dylan Thomas, you believe that Surrealism "is something that pokes its head round the corner and cries 'Boo'" at you, then David Gascoyne's *Man's life is this meat* is not for you. But to the more adventurous, these poems have a curious fascination; they stimulate and horrify together. In addition, they are inclined to mystification, almost to irritation. Lines like—

"You must always write the last two letters of her christian name
Upside down in blue pencil"

may well cause anguish to the followers of the Poet Laureate or Sir John Squire. If you are not one of these, Mr. Gascoyne deserves some notice; he is only outrageous in metaphor; his verse is traditional enough in form, and he has a sense of beauty, however strange.

Those who enjoyed that remarkable novel, *The Asiatics* (and I hope they were many), will read Frederick Prokosch's *The Assassins*—and they will not be disappointed. Here is a real poet: his sense of words, his rhythmic vitality, his strange fancy, combine to make one of the most notable books of the year. Most of the poems are called forth by Oriental scenes:

. . . Think of the other cities; the dead ones;
The priests in their stained robes passing the urns, and the silken
Virgins bearing the frozen nectarines.
Those led to the sacrifice, the
Sufferers, the girls with the curling
Tresses and eyes like pearls. . .

The Library Assistant

The sea and vast continents echo in the cadences of this coloured and exotic verse. This is a book not to be missed. Archibald Macleish has added to *Panic*, a volume of verse, *Public speech*. In direct contrast to Prokosch, his poetry is classical in restraint, his rhythms broken and abrupt; but his very bareness gives his work power. He has been accused of the "Fascist unconscious" by the proletarian Mike Gold; but no reactionary tendencies are apparent in this book; in fact, the poem, "The German girls," seems to give the direct lie to this criticism:

*"Are you familiar with the mounted men—
The grocery lot with the loud talk in restaurants;
Smellers of delicatessen: ex-cops,
Barbers, fruitsellers. . . ."*

Is not this a recognizable portrait of the S.A. or Fascisti? I hope this book will not be neglected, for Macleish is definitely a poetic force.

Dylan Thomas's *Twenty-five poems* have recently been the cause of a heated correspondence in the *Sunday Times*. Miss Sitwell said he was a poet; the conventionalists raged against his crabbed diction and impenetrable metaphors; and it must be admitted that many of these poems are tough to crack and sour in the kernel; but they are not all queer. Poems like "The Hand that signed the paper felled a city" and "Ears in the turrets hear" are more simple; while those who will not tolerate obscurity might attack Browning instead of the moderns. Dylan Thomas is an original mind; only forty or so of his poems have been published; we can confidently look for greater achievement in a later volume.

*"How unpleasant to meet Mr. Eliot
With his features of clerical cut
And his brow so grim
And his mouth so prim . . .
And his if, and perhaps, and but."*

So runs one of the "Minor poems" in the new edition of Eliot's *Collected poems*. I hope none will feel like this. The influence of these poems is everywhere: *The Waste land* and *Ash Wednesday* are now part of our literature; this edition collects fugitive pieces, minor poems, and a magnificent new long poem, "Burnt Norton," into one definitive volume. It would be impudent to recommend him; but since there seem to be some libraries in which he is not represented, I have the temerity to do so. An

The Library Assistant

equally important volume comes from Cape—*More poems*, by A. E. Housman. These are no literary dredgings; many of them are equal to anything in *The Shropshire lad* or *Last poems*, and we must be grateful to the poet's brother for his wise selection. This is a "must" book, as the Americans say.

Julian Bell's *Work for the winter* is the work of a new poet, original, a craftsman, and one for whom we will look again. He is a fine satirist—his "political poems" are probably the ablest in the book; he is also an elegant translator, as the poem from Rimbaud shows. His shorter verses and love poems are capable and neatly turned, and the book is a welcome addition to the Hogarth Living poets series. *Twelve noon* is Richard Church's tenth volume of verse. His is a quiet talent: he writes serenely of natural things, of love, the seasons and nature; but he has also a pleasant irony, as the poem "Reckless" shows; the description of a bank-clerk's fine funeral:

" *This is his first
Wanton extravagance,
Subtle and rich,
His only adventure.*"

James Reeves is a new-comer, and his *The Natural need* introduces a poet traditional enough in form and content, yet surprisingly free from influences. His natural need is for poetry; he thinks in verse; he possesses originality:

. . . " *See the Spring
Each year perform its leisurely
Long act of memory.*"

He writes well of natural things and homely affairs, and his verse is flexible and rhythmic: a work of distinction.

I come to a group of three poets whose work might be classified as definitely "Masculine." Paul Engle, in *Break the heart's anger*, describes the wanderings of an American through Europe, in rugged poetry that has much of Whitman's "barbaric yawp." There is a little too much of Mr. Engle; his verse at times lacks that economy and conciseness we have grown used to. But he has felt the tragedy of Germany and Vienna, and described it graphically; his American poems, too, express the raw life and vigour of the New World. Roy Campbell has written a considerable volume in *Mithraic emblems*. The section entitled "Toledo, 1936" is of

The Library Assistant

more than topical interest ; they are typical Campbell poems of the Spanish war ; the satirical poems are as vigorous as ever. An interesting offer is made of " full " versions of these " for the cost of typing," for, according to the author, " they have had to be emasculated down to the pommie level." Michael Roberts, known for his critical work and his anthologies, has now produced a volume of poems. These poems are not without their influences : Pound most notably ; yet Mr. Roberts at his best has an individual style. His best poems are stories of hazard and mountaineering, such as " The Elegy for dead climbers," while " Chelyushkin " is an exciting account of that great expedition. His metres are successful and interesting, his sense of words sure ; a new poet we can welcome.

It is now six years since that first paper-backed edition of Auden's *Poems* startled us ; and we have had to wait that time for *Look ! stranger*. For those to whom poetry means anything this book is essential ; it is mature work, the product of an original mind, and a leader of a new school of moderns. This book and *The Assassins*, are, to my mind, the outstanding verse of the year. In Auden's book there should be something for everyone. For the self-satisfied :

" *Let him not cease to praise
Then his spacious days ;
Yes, and the success
Let him bless, let him bless,
Let him see in this
The profits larger,
And the sins venal,
Lest he see as it is,
The loss as major
And final, final.*"

For the curious, those short biographies he does so well ; for the political minded :

" *A host of columbines and pathics
Who show the poor by mathematics
In their defence
That wealth and poverty are merely
Mental pictures, so that clearly
Every tramp's a landlord really
In mind events.*"

The Library Assistant

But enough of quotation ; the longer poems are the best work Auden has done, and cannot be quoted. Read this book !

It is a far cry from most modern poetry to Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*, translated by J. B. Leishman. Rilke is caviare to the general. He wrote in German, and is almost untranslatable. Yet Mr. Leishman has made the heroic effort of translating his most difficult and maturest work. That the translator has managed to convey most of the sense of the original there is no doubt ; he has also retained the rhythms of the German as far as possible ; the result is a real triumph. Only a concentrated reading and re-reading of these poems will yield their full value. Rilke is subtle, difficult ; few readers will make the effort, but the few who do will be repaid, for here is the flowering of a great and noble mind, poetry packed with thought and insight. The Hogarth Press and Mr. Leishman are to be congratulated.

There are too many anthologies already, you may say. But two that have appeared this year are indispensable. The first, W. B. Yeats's *Oxford book of modern verse*, has already been dealt with in "Recommended books" : I will only add that it should join its predecessors in the series on all library shelves. *The Faber book of modern verse* is probably more truly representative of the modern movement in its main current ; Mr. Yeats has ranged in many backwaters. Mr. Roberts has done his work in a more comprehensive way ; his introduction is a valuable piece of criticism. The selection ranges from Gerard Manley Hopkins to David Gascoyne, through the Sitwells and Auden. The Americans are well represented : E. E. Cummings, Marianne Moore, Hart Crane, all have their place. Mr. Roberts has done for the new generation what *Georgian poetry* did for the old one, and this anthology should be widely available. You may not "like" modern poetry ; you may call it cacophonous, obscure, at times absurd. A reading of *The Faber book of modern verse* will do much to dispel these illusions, for illusions they are.



Children's Books of 1936

MISS B. J. ASH

ANDERSEN, L., *Lis sails to Teneriffe* (Routledge, 6s.). BATTEN, H. MORTIMER, *Starlight* (Chambers, 5s.). BENNETT, R., and GORDON, H. S., *Let's get up a concert* (Nelson, 3s. 6d.). CHESMORE, S., *Behind the letter box* (Nelson, 2s. 6d.). COBB, R., *This way to London* (Pitman, 3s. 6d.). DOONE, R., *Nuvat the brave* (Blackie, 3s. 6d.). DOORLY, E., *The Insect*

The Library Assistant

man (Heffer, 3s. 6d.). "EUPHAN" and "KLAXON," *The Touchstone* (Burns Oates, 3s. 6d.). GAG, WANDA, *Gone is gone* (Faber, 2s.). GRIGS, M., *The Yellow cat* (O.U.P., 3s. 6d.). HICKEY, T. F. W., *Bulldog Sheila, or The Gang* (Heinemann, 6s.). JEANS, A., *Harry the Peke* (Black, 5s.). KENT, L. A., *He went with Marco Polo* (Harrap, 5s.). LEWIS, L., *Jubilee and her mother* (Hamish Hamilton, 5s.). LOW, A. M., *Great scientific achievements* (Nelson, 3s. 6d.). POWELL, H., *The World was gay* (O.U.P., 3s. 6d.). RANSOME, A., *Pigeon post* (Cape, 7s. 6d.). SPRING, H., *Sampson's circus* (Collins, 7s. 6d.). STREATFEILD, N., *Ballet shoes* (Dent, 6s.). TOZER, K., *Here comes Mumfie* (Murray, 5s.).

PERHAPS the most remarkable thing about this year's books for children is the marked improvement in the quality of the story-books, and this not only in the tales themselves, but also in the production. A dozen or more really good stories have been published, and even among the more sensational type of books, progress is noticeable. First-class authors are coming forward, and paper, type, and illustrations are better.

The new, bright, cloth bindings are very gay and attractive, but it seems to me that, until such a time as a really attractive washable cloth can be produced, it would be as well to avoid the lightest shades, especially yellow and orange. It is heart-breaking for the librarian to see books coming back after one issue, thumb-marked and grubby.

Paper and print are much better on the whole, while badly produced illustrations on clay-coated paper are rapidly giving place to illustrations of a better type, which can be produced on the same paper as the text.

As in previous years, the younger ones are especially well served, and it is quite impossible to mention all the old favourites, who have more adventures to tell us about, this Christmas. Suffice it to say that in most cases they are as good as ever, but special mention must be made of Mumfie. *Here comes Mumfie*, by Tozer, is a really charming book, and the pictures, although mainly in black and white, are so full of life and movement, that you expect the little elephant to step off the page and bow, or stamp his foot at you. *Gone is gone*, by Wanda Gag, has black and white pictures, too, and very amusing they are, especially the one which depicts the pigs and geese "full to bursting"; but this is obviously a book for the five-year-old, and at that stage, they want their pictures in bold outline and colour.

Another remarkably good book for those who can just enjoy a full-length story is *The World was gay*, by Powell. It is a delightful story of a family of Victorian children who manage to have a very good time, in

The Library Assistant

spite of such inconveniences as governesses and elastic-sided boots. Here, too, we have a binding which is bright, yet not easily marked.

And so we come to the animals, and here there is such an abundance that it is almost bewildering.

Particularly good for the younger children is *The Yellow cat*, by Grigs; no ordinary cat indeed, but what wouldn't I have given to have been among the crowd when the fat trainer was chasing "Straw" over the house-tops. *Harry the Peke* had some troublesome moments with his numerous feline enemies too, but in spite of it all, he managed to prove that even a Pekingese can be a sporting little dog. For older children, *Starlight*, the story of a wolf, by a well-known animal author, is very well done. Although it includes a good deal of information, the description is excellent and the story well sustained. *Nuvat the brave*, an Eskimo boy, rescued an injured dog and reared him as his own. Together they go in search of food, and after many adventures, they succeed, not only in bringing seal to the tribe, but also in reversing Nuvat's reputation as a coward. This book is one of the few first-class stories that are available at a reasonable price, most of them ranging from five shillings to seven and six.

From the creatures of the wild we come nearer home, and find that there are several good books on the Zoos. *Jubilee and her mother*, by Lorna Lewis, must be classed among the best, with its excellent collection of photographs of that engaging little chimpanzee during its first year of life, and we cannot help but share her obvious admiration for her keeper.

Even children can work wonders with animals and birds at times, and in the eagerly awaited addition to the Ransome books, we learn how carrier pigeons are trained. *Pigeon post* is worthy to stand with the other "Swallows and Amazons" books, as the best stories for children to-day, and I consider that it is better than the two which have immediately preceded it. These books stand in a class of their own, for the children really live. Their adventures are never impossible, and no eventuality is taken for granted, everything being carefully thought out and planned beforehand by the children themselves.

This year we are fortunate in having another book of the same type. *Sampson's circus* is a remarkably good tale of two "real" boys and their adventures in a caravan. All the characters are alive, but Charley Chaffinch, the cheery Cockney, is a real gem. The plot starts quietly, but works up to an exciting climax, with just that spice of mystery which is so beloved by the youth of to-day.

The Library Assistant

Historical stories are right out of favour, but I venture to predict that *He went with Marco Polo* will be an exception. The canvas is not overcrowded. The story moves quickly and easily, and although it is useless to pretend that it will lead directly to the source from which it has obviously drawn its inspiration, it is highly probable that when the "Travels" are met with on the shelves later on, they may not be passed by.

As usual, the girls are badly neglected. Only two books stand out as of any particular merit: *Ballet shoes*, by Streatfeild, and *Bulldog Sheila*, by Hickey. *Ballet shoes* is a charming and original story about three little girls who are being trained for the stage. This book breaks fresh ground, and incidentally contains quite a lot of useful information about the regulations governing child-performers.

In *Bulldog Sheila* we have an answer to the constant demand for a "mystery story, please," but, strangely enough, for girls. The plot, although a little improbable, is not entirely impossible, and on the whole it is well told.

In spite of the fact that outstanding successes seem to be in the realms of fiction, non-fiction books have maintained the high standard which they reached last year.

There have been additions to most of the popular series, and a new venture, called the *Pageant of progress*, deserves special mention. Authors are beginning to realize that the youth of to-day often knows as much or more about technical subjects as his elders, and books which attempt to write down to children are rapidly disappearing.

The *Great scientific achievements* of recent years are briefly summarized by A. M. Low in his latest book. This author is always popular with the older boys. In *Behind the letter box*, by Chesmore, we have a clear account of the Post Office service, told in a most entertaining style. There should be more of this type of book, describing in detail the work involved in the conducting of our industrial and civic life.

There have been few additions of any note to our meagre stock of poetry and plays, but there is one book which will be a real help to harassed teachers, club leaders, and others who are expected to produce some sort of entertainment at this time of year. *Let's get up a concert* will answer all their questions, be it for a village concert or a charity performance.

Good and attractive history books, both on England and on London, are few and far between, and so we welcome *The Touchstone* to our shelves. It is a record of everyday life in England from the earliest times as seen

The Library Assistant

through the eyes of a stone, set into the hearth of an old manor-house. The stone tells her tale to two modern children, and one cannot help but be reminded of *Rewards and fairies*. It is a pity, however, that so few of these story-histories have any sort of index. Frequent inquiries show that children want something to supplement facts and events in text-books, and without these guides it is often impossible to find the material, although it is probably available.

This way to London is a great deal more than a mere guide book, and the chapter on Nursery Rhymes will be especially welcome.

Going farther afield, there is another adventure book from Lis Andersen. This type of book helps to satisfy the needs of the older girl, and although this is a much older Lis, the same frank method of expression and sense of humour are there.

As for *The Insect man*, by Doorly, I must admit that I thought it frankly dull and disappointing. True, it is the only life of any account that has been done for children this year, but the attempt to mix biography and anthology is not an unqualified success. Why cannot we have more biographies in the Youth Edition, and not of recent publications, which are so often of little lasting worth, but of the standard lives which, either by reason of their style or their enormous length, are usually too forbidding for the young reader to tackle, however great may be his thirst for knowledge.

While some of the shelves are full to overcrowding, there are still gaps to be filled. Especially pressing is the need for books for the older girls. At present we have nothing to offer them, and quite recently my worst fears were realized when the latest addition to a very popular series of books was heralded as "The best romantic book of the month." While school stories still maintain their popularity, there is a demand for stories of family life, and the difficulty at the moment is to find books which are sufficiently well written and not over-sentimental.

School stories are less popular with the boys, and in response to the demand for mystery stories, one or two tolerably good detective tales have appeared. Here, however, the problem is not the same, for there are many good adventure tales which can well be placed on the junior shelves.

I am sure that five more sets of "Twins," which have just arrived, will be given a hearty welcome, but there is still room for improvement in our history and travel stock. True, the shelves may appear full enough, but when actual information is sought, the books are found to be lamentably out of date.

The Library Assistant

The recent improvement in books for children has proved that the publishers are not altogether unaware of the defects and omissions, and I think that we may look forward with confidence to still greater progress during the coming year.



Some Fiction of 1936

T. I. M. CLULOW

WHAT an incongruous task this is ! A sexton disinters his corpses by candle-light; spirit-raising is practised only in darkened rooms. But I, on the sunniest day for weeks, with a fresh wind blowing, and the road calling, must perforce (since post and printer wait for no man) stifle my instinct for perambulation, to rack my brain for memories of dead yester-year. And what an ungrateful task also ! A vast sea of print, seemingly without feature, forgotten even as it passes. For the modern publishing methods, intent on large turnovers, are rapidly assimilating fiction to the evening papers that we buy only to glimpse the latest Test Match score, and then fling into the gutter. This remains true, despite the return to favour of the three-decker novel in the guise of one mammoth volume. It is significant that this increase in size is contemporaneous with a growing length in the screening-time of films. Such books as *Gone with the wind*, or *The Son of Marietta*, are not without their merits, but their length is not one of them, it springs from no artistic necessity. Bluntly, these novels are ways of escape, with this refinement of technique over their smaller counterparts, that they save trouble in adjustment to a new set of characters, and cut out one or two visits to the library.

But to return to our muttons. Before I pass on to particular books, let me confess my limitations. This article will not be a general resurrection ; the books to be discussed represent my personal predilections only, on a necessarily incomplete survey of the field. Hence it is an open choice where I should begin, and if I mention Stevie Smith's *Novel on yellow paper* first, it is not because I think it the most important, but rather that I enjoyed it most in the reading. Whether her style, which caused some fluttering in the literary doves, owes more to Sterne than Stein, or to Anita Loos than either, it is admirably and artfully adapted to her purpose. Gems, now of thought, now of expression, lie scattered in the nonsensical farrago that is her picture of a flapper's mind. Imagine all the snatches of conversation you heard in a year placed in one person's mouth, and you have

The Library Assistant

the idea. It is even more amusing than it sounds, and I commend it to all who like their fiction to demand some effort on their own part. Though it is more straightforward in style, Robert Graves' *Antigua, penny, puce* gave me something of the same malicious enjoyment. It is almost incredible that a stamp (indicated in the title) should be made to serve as a key for so many situations. Round the stamp centres the life-long opposition of a brother and sister, and their struggle for its possession enables Mr. Graves to ridicule effectively quite a number of the things he dislikes.

In contrast to these Aldous Huxley's *Eyeless in Gaza* should appear better than it does. It exhibits all the learning, the stark honesty, the brilliant powers of observation and description that in his earlier work have made him one of the very few living English novelists of international importance. And to this he has added a brilliant use of a new device of technique—the shuffling of episodes in time. This aimless darting about is not so artless as he would, seemingly, have us believe, and though the pattern is not apparent till the end, the juxtaposition of characters and incidents compels a calculated effect on the reader. Yet the old defects are here—the same types of character, the same emphasis on their less agreeable aspects, and though the book seems to mark his abandonment of a detached, ironic attitude in favour of positive pacifist propaganda, it is even less convincing than such propaganda commonly is, and leaves one with a sense of frustration. Though it is perhaps *the* book of the year to read, I question if it will be often re-read.

As propaganda for pacifism, C. S. Forester's *The General* is a far more effective work. This portrait of an officer, who by chance and cunning, rose to command more men than Napoleon, forms a useful corollary to Lloyd George's *Memoirs*; and is not marred by their venom. It shows with a devastating impartiality the virtues and defects commonly exhibited by our leaders in the World War, and by making them concrete in the life-history of one man, undermines faith in a system that could not only produce, but also promote such inelastic qualities of mind to so responsible a position. "It might have been . . . more advantageous for England if the British Army had not been quite so full of men of high rank who were ready for responsibility, so unflinchingly devoted to their duty, so unmoved in the face of difficulties, of such unfaltering courage." Since such men are never likely to be lacking, *verb. sap.* . . .

From propaganda to politics is barely a step. Bernstein's *Choose a bright morning*, a laughable skit on dictatorial government and its adjuncts—

The Library Assistant

propaganda, Jew-baiting, big business, concentration camps, and Heroism, has passages of grim humour. But what is needed is something that will make the dictators laugh at themselves, instead of being laughed at by others, which few of us can relish. A first-rate antithesis is Geoffrey Gorer's *Nobody talks politics*, a scathing examination of our various parties, from a perusal of which only the proletarian (as distinct from the high-brow) Communists and the left-wing Tories are likely to emerge still smiling. The mechanism he employs makes the novel somewhat stiff in movement, but his intelligent criticism and excellent stories maintain the interest.

Three other novels with a political flavour are Ralph Bates' *The Olive field*, Halldor Laxness' *Salka Valka*, and Nizovoy's *The Ocean*. Each of these is concerned in some way with Communism, but each has virtues not connected with approval or disapproval of that creed. *The Olive field* has been most keenly appreciated, perhaps, for its topical interest, bearing on the present struggle. The scene is set in an Andalusian background, and depicts the life and conditions of the people in their struggle for existence. The story itself is thin enough, but the book is full of detailed information about modern Spanish life, the nature of the country, the joys and trials of the people, and, not least, the culture of the olive. As a record it is deserving of deeper study than a novel customarily claims. *Salka Valka* provides a vivid picture of the harsh life in an Icelandic village perched between mountains and fjord. The life-story of Salka, influenced first by the rough sailor, Steintor, and then by her love for the idealist, Arnaldur, reveals the forces stirred in a primitive civilization by the clash between Christianity and Communism. The issue is left confused, but the picture of that bleak, toiling community remains sharply outlined. *The Ocean* has also a primitive setting, on the lonely Russian Arctic coast. The contrast of characters between William, with his caveman zest for the pioneer's life, and the nostalgic, city-bred Vera, his wife, is artificial, and it is rather in the antagonism between father and son, with his enthusiasm for the new community that the plot comes to life. But the real interest of the story lies throughout in the rich descriptions of hunting and fishing episodes, of the terrible lemming migration, and the long journeys over snow and ice through frightful blizzards. They are the best thing of the kind, since Welzl's *Thirty Years in the golden north*.

Paul Horgan's *No quarter given* was an accomplished study of sophistication; *Main line west* turns to the elemental outlands, whose beauty and richness he finds in their wide and simple horizons. The sensitive control

The Library Assistant

of narrative shown in the earlier work is here used to refine the raw vitality so characteristic of modern American writing. Another writer, John Dos Passos, in *The Big money*, completes his picture of the American scene in the years after the war. With the now familiar technique of the "Camera-eye," news headlines, short lives of prominent public figures, as a background for his characters, he reveals a corrupt and stupid society, raw and meaningless. It is with Huxley that his work invites comparison, and the contrast shows that the one dissects too much, while Dos Passos does not interpret enough. But his work is an essential preliminary to such interpretation, and will remain, when works more glib and facile are forgotten.

The Double quest, by R. J. Cruikshank, now editor of the *London Star*, is a thoughtful attempt to show the British and American scenes in contrast, and though the characters are wooden, the incidental information is valuable. It serves as a link to connect two very good English interpretations to contrast with Dos Passos and Horgan. Winifred Holtby's *South Riding* is two novels in one, a penetrating account of English local government in its effect on the lives of typical individuals in a provincial setting, and the tragic love-story of Sarah Burton and Robert Carne. As a consequence, neither is completely satisfying; but at least we are made aware of a community "muddling through" and the irresolvable conflict between tradition and a world in flux. Less immediate, but more finished and more beautiful, is H. E. Bates' *House of women*. Bates' characters come to life spontaneously, and govern the story by an inward necessity. Rosie Perkins' coming to the land with hatred, and its transformation to a fierce affection is a theme of absorbing interest, told with all the author's feeling for the ever-changing loveliness of rural scenery and life.

We have too little from Miss Rebecca West, and *The Thinking reed* is therefore very welcome. A long book, made pleasant by her fine sense and feeling for the handling of words, it is concerned with the lives of the rich and especially the feelings of two of them. While she satirizes the minor characters who move from one playground to another, with a wit that is almost caricature, she shows a deeper understanding in setting out the dangers that riches cause even such pleasant characters as Marc and Isabelle to face. A first novel, Francis Pollock's *Jupiter eight*, provides an interesting comparison. It takes essentially the same types as Miss West's but centres them in a Canadian city, and while avoiding too much local colour, yet gives enough of its unfamiliar background to make it convincing. The story is seen through the eyes of Derrock, who makes a small fortune

The Library Assistant

by a fluke in stock speculation. His soaring moods are well presented, but never allowed to get out of control, and unbalance or retard the story. If you like nicely observed delineation of character, without high moral purpose, Mr. Pollock is your man. More polished work in the same genre is to be found in R. C. Hutchinson's *Shining scabbard*, which chronicles the lives of a French family. Eugène, living only to get reversed the decision of the court-martial which cashiered him for cowardice (this seems to be a favourite occupation with Frenchmen!), Renée, his daughter-in-law, and Tischer, the old Swiss family doctor, are all memorable creations, displaying the author's fine comprehension of thought and motive.

Charles Morgan's *Sparkenbroke* was disappointing. His hero's character and actions are unreal and precious, quite unlike the true mystic's, for mysticism is an experience, not a theory, of life. The mysticism of Robert Speaight's *Angel in the mist* you may not share, but at least it is credible, and integrates, instead of spoiling, the story. And those who find the theme irksome, may seek solace in the interesting, and occasionally illuminating, dramatic comments with which it is embellished.

The outstanding historical novel that came my way was Vincent Sheean's *Sanfelice*, set in Naples at the time of the short-lived Republic, 1798-9. Though Luisa Sanfelice's personal share in the events of those troubled days is a moving story, the historical personages are perhaps seen more clearly in the round, and Nelson's scutcheon is seen to be sadly stained. But the whole revolutionary story is presented in a fascinating tale that loses nothing in interest from the defeat of the rebels and Sanfelice's tragic end.

Lastly, I would briefly recommend two volumes of short stories: Halward's *To tea on Sunday*, and Beachcroft's *You must break out sometimes*. Both writers display a finely controlled economy of words, and though Mr. Beachcroft is the more versatile, Mr. Halward has the deeper perception of working-class character. They are doing to-day for the English short story what the Romantics did for poetry, and what the Americans found out how to do long since.

A middling year, no more.

Some December Examination Questions Examined

(I) ELEMENTARY

MISS E. F. WRAGG

THE examination time has arrived again, and even in the Elementary examination questions one comes up against a problem raised by a deplorable lack of clarity of expression. Could not terms which have a descriptive meaning and also a legal status as local government units be eliminated from the questions, or used purely in one sense or the other?

The following question, if it were answered from every point of view, would take the whole of the time given for the candidates to answer three questions.

"What does the Public Libraries Act authorize a local authority to do for the provision of books in:

(a) An urban; and (b) A rural district?"

Do the examiners really and truly refer to an urban district and to a rural district working under a duly elected Urban District Council and Rural District Council respectively; or is a wider implication expected?

Urban District Councils do not necessarily administer to an urban population. Many of these are old-established councils and only control, perhaps, 300 population living entirely under rural conditions. On the other hand, some urban districts have grown to such an extent that the districts under their control have a larger population than many boroughs.

What has a rural district as a local government unit to do with library administration? So far as I can discover, a rural district council has no legislative powers under the Library Acts except by the union of parishes. It is quite possible that in this instance candidates who have experience of work with other types of councils will place a different significance on the question from that intended by the examiners.

(II) INTERMEDIATE (SECTION I) W. HOWARD PHILLIPS

On the whole the paper was a fair one. The examiners, while showing ingenuity in covering the greater part of the syllabus and presenting several of the usual "key" topics with a new trend, succeeded in keeping the "practical" aspects of the subject to the fore.

The Library Assistant

Q. 1. "*What do you know of the principles of notation?*" is straightforward, but we hope that students followed the new edition of the "Introduction," which modifies the principles given in the old editions and in the "manual."

In Q. 3, "*How many kinds of book classification can you distinguish?*", "kinds of book classification" undoubtedly would call forth a discussion on the published schemes from many misguided candidates who hastily scanned the question; but "kinds" first suggests "Bibliographical" and "Bibliothecal," and then, surely, the various factors that have been, and still are, used to arrange a collection of books, such as size, subject, alphabetical order of author, etc. The question could have been more clearly worded with no loss of dignity to the examiners.

Q. 7, however, needs a few words of comment. "*Mr. Sayers' Canon No. 3 reads: 'Characteristics must be consistent, the same characteristics being sought as the arranging factor in every object.' Explain this and show, with examples, how the Dewey Classification violates this Canon.*" Here, we feel, the examiners, by a poor choice of words, have missed formulating a sound question, which would have shown clearly the candidate's grasp, or lack of understanding, of the essentials. In its implications this canon is fundamentally unsound, and is one of the most absurd rules ever to be advanced. It is impossible to use a characteristic consistently throughout the division of even a specific topic. The logical rule governing division, on which we presume this canon was based, reads: "Each *step* of the division must be based on a single principle of division." In the text-books, the attempt to simplify (?) this rule has produced—nonsense. The examiners are undoubtedly aware of this (they state in the May 1936 examination paper: "Many subjects may be divided by more than one relevant characteristic"), and should have asked for a criticism. It can be said that the wording "*explain this*" asks for such a criticism, but the last phrase regarding the Dewey Classification definitely leads the candidate astray. This classification does, of course, violate the canon, but so does every existing classification, knowledge or otherwise, that attempts to subdivide in detail!

Q. 9, "*State what you know of Brown's reasons for the order he assigned to the main classes of the 'Subject Classification,'*" is covered by the syllabus, and all the required information is to be found in the Preface to the scheme, which, needless to say, should have been studied carefully. Nevertheless, we lament its inclusion. The text-books have made so much of the supposed perfect *evolutionary* order of the main classes of this scheme—

The Library Assistant

Brown himself modestly claims a "logical order"—that we fear this question will further perpetuate their insistence on this mythical order as a criterion of a good book classification. Future students of the subject, in attempting to prepare for such questions, will be encouraged towards a "parrot" memorizing of these mental rhapsodies, "cramming" what they must fail to understand. Such a question in an examination paper leads us back to the bad old days of the above-reproach "bible" text-books, in which the astounding fairy tale of knowledge emerging in a certain fixed sequence, Astronomy before Geology, etc., and the conception of an absolute order is so glibly set forth. It is astounding that such an effort of the imagination should be so widely accepted as established fact. However, the question asks for *Brown's reasons*, and it seems obvious that the examiners, both practical librarians, have laid a little trap for candidates whose sole knowledge of the Subject Classification is culled from the text-books.

Little can be said on the practical paper. The examiners have followed the old tradition in ignoring the type of book that forms the majority of the "recent additions," and selecting those which can, and will, be classified in different places by experienced classifiers, when confronted with the *actual books*. We can only hope that the examiners give full and studied consideration to every placing—and mark accordingly. We implore them to remember that, whereas, they have, in all probability, handled the books in question—and perhaps have disagreed on the final placing!—candidates are compelled to assess the predominant subject from a bare title and a "blurb." The form of this paper runs contrary to all theoretical rules and practical experience. It is humbly suggested to the powers-that-be that in future the practice in the corresponding paper of the Cataloguing examination be followed. I believe that some years ago a resolution to this effect was placed before the Education Committee of the Library Association, who decided to take no action "*as a sufficient quantity of suitable prospectuses were not available.*" We can only hope that with the advent of the new syllabus the imagination and resources of our parent body will be used to better advantage.

The Library Assistant

The Divisions

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH

ABOUT fifty members of the Branch met at Liverpool on Friday, 20th November, when, by kind permission of the Chief Librarian, Mr. J. F. Smith, a meeting was held in the Reference Library.

In an attempt to break away from the stereotyped "symposium" form of programme a debate, conducted according to the rules of debating, had been arranged. The motion—"That Compulsory Education has done more harm than good and should be abolished"—was introduced by Mr. J. C. Harrison and supported by Miss F. M. Lythgoe and Mr. F. G. Learoyd. Mr. T. E. Headon led the opposition and was supported by Miss W. Pugh and Mr. I. Birkett. The brilliant arguments brought forward by both sides created prolonged discussion. The motion was rejected, but by the very narrow majority of four votes.

At the conclusion of a very successful meeting, votes of thanks were passed to Mr. J. F. Smith and the Branch Social Committee for the excellent catering arrangements.

Members are asked to note that a Whist Drive and Social Evening is to be held on Saturday, 16th January, at Castle's Café, Dale Street, Liverpool.

YORKSHIRE DIVISION

The members of the Division met at York Library on 25th November. In spite of the dislocation of traffic owing to fog, about sixty members of the 100 who had accepted the invitation were present.

The details of the present library building and administration were explained to the visitors by members of the York staff. Particular interest was shown in the plans of the extension to the present building.

The afternoon session at the York Minster proved all too short for the description of the stained glass by Canon Harrison, Chancellor and librarian, and for the visit to the exhibition of illuminated manuscripts and early prayer books arranged in the Chapter House. All members present were grateful for the unique opportunity that the Chancellor's presence provided; also for the visit to the Minster library on a day other than "opening day."

After the official welcome to the Division by the Chairman of the York Library Committee the evening meeting took the form of a debate.

The motion before the meeting was :

The Library Assistant

"That any form of literary censorship is inimical to the best interests of intelligent thought and culture in this country."

Mr. Sayell, of Wakefield, supported by Mr. Smith, of Dewsbury, proposed the motion; the opposition being taken by Miss Walton, of Sheffield, supported by Mr. Macdonald, of Leeds.

The four main speakers, by careful preparation in collaboration, managed not to overlap. Mr. Sayell and Mr. Smith in different ways drove home that the public will always be its own censor, and that advanced books which are rejected by one generation, are freely circulated by the next.

Miss Walton suggested the introduction of a Board of Censors for books of imagination, such as those on religion, politics, social theory, and human travel. She suggested that any new thought in morality and social behaviour should be presented in non-fiction form.

Mr. Macdonald attempted a definition of obscenity. He also referred to the lack of complete freedom of speech in newspapers to-day; in that America had referred undesirably to King Edward whilst the English newspapers were silent.

The motion called forth a good discussion from the general members. It was particularly pleasing to notice that several members who had not spoken at previous meetings had something of note to say.

Those taking part were: Mr. Walker (Leeds), Miss Richardson (West Riding), Mr. Ingham (Leeds), Mr. Reed (Leeds), Miss Jackson (Scarborough), Mr. Smith (Leeds), Mr. Bramham (Leeds), and Mr. Howarth (Scarborough).

The discussion tended to favour some form of censorship. The vote taken at the end resulted in 17 votes for and 12 against the motion; this could hardly be taken as the view of all the members, as many had had to leave to catch trains.

Both the afternoon and evening sessions were thoroughly enjoyed by those who were able to overcome the travelling difficulties occasioned by the fog.

Thanks to the four main speakers were proposed and seconded by Mr. Bebbington, of Leeds, and Mr. German, of York. Mr. Walker and Mr. Reed (Leeds) expressed the Division's thanks to the librarian, Chairman, and members of the York Library Committee.

The Library Assistant Correspondence

31 MUSEUM STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.

23rd November, 1936.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—

INDUSTRY'S USE OF LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARIES

It is believed that many librarians, particularly those in the London area, might be interested in the report of the joint meeting of the London and Home Counties Branch of the L.A. and A.S.L.I.B., held at the Royal Institute of British Architects on 21st October, when questions relating to the use made by industry of London's public library services were fully discussed.

A very brief summary appeared in the November issue of the *L.A. Record*, and there has since been prepared a full account of the various contributions to the symposium, mimeographed copies of which will gladly be supplied (while they last) to those who will forward a stamped addressed foolscap envelope to the A.S.L.I.B. office as below.

Yours faithfully,

G. R. BOLTON,

*Chairman, London and Home Counties
Branch, Library Association.*

ARTHUR F. RIDLEY,

*Chairman, Association of Special Libraries
and Information Bureaux.*

CENTRAL LIBRARY, BURNLEY.

4th December, 1936.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—

ERRORS IN CLASSIFICATION

Mr. Cronshaw's article, "Bulletins and the Barrier," in your last issue refers to the classification of Gill's *Necessity for belief* being allocated to 132.3 (mental derangement—melancholia) in the Burnley Bulletin.

As a matter of fact, we do not use Dewey for 100 and 200, and have

The Library Assistant

considerably revised tables for Class 800 and part of Class 900. In our tables, 132.3 is "Relations of knowledge to sentiment, will and belief," a subdivision of "Knowledge, its origin and limits."

I should have thought that finding this book placed at Melancholia was sufficient to produce a sinking feeling that, at any rate in this criticism, the writer himself was on insecure ground. It is idle to criticize unless all the circumstances are known.

Yours faithfully,
W. B. COUPLAND,
Borough Librarian.

CATALOGUING DEPARTMENT,
SHEFFIELD CITY LIBRARIES.
8th December, 1936.

THE EDITOR,
THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

DEAR SIR,—

It is quite obvious that Mr. Coupland has not done me the honour of reading my article thoroughly enough to discover the reasons for its appearance in THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT. It is stated distinctly in the second paragraph that "I have endeavoured to evade the possibilities of unfair comment by keeping away from classes and sections which are often adjusted and curtailed according to local preferences. My only purpose is to lay bare the weakness of the Dewey system." Criticism of numbers does not appear in my review, which is a purely factual one. I repeat again, as I stated in my article, that "definite reasons, local or otherwise, can be advanced for the placing of any book mentioned."

However, I have apparently tripped over one of the barriers which I attempted to point out, but Mr. Coupland, by admitting that he has abandoned two of Dewey's main classes and considerably revised two more, merely helps to prove my main contention—that the structure of Dewey is obsolete. Far from having that sinking feeling, Mr. Coupland's confirmation of my views leaves me with a positive glow.

Yours faithfully,
F. E. CRONSHAW,
Chief Cataloguer.

Other correspondence is unavoidably held over.

The Library Assistant

New Members

CENTRAL.—Miss E. M. Copsey (Essex County, Chelmsford); Ruth Couzens (Dumfries); J. Edwards (Hertford County, Hertford); Miss J. Griffiths (Flat 4, 10 Wyndham Crescent, Tufnell Park, N.19); Miss I. Middleton (Torquay); E. A. Waller (Hertford County, Hertford).

South-Eastern.—G. H. Lawrence (Margate).

Yorkshire.—Miss J. Atkinson, H. K. Porter, Miss I. Zimmerman (Chapel Allerton Branch, Leeds).

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